
OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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OBITUARY

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OBSERVATIONS
AND
REFLECTIONS
ON A
WAR WITH RUSSIA.

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Scelerata infania belli.

VIR. Æn. lib. vii.

Nescia mens hominum, fatisque futuræ,
Et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis!

VIR. Æn. lib. x.

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OBSEVATIONS

RELATIONS

WITH RUSSIA



Observations and Reflections, &c.

WHEN affairs of moment are about to be undertaken ; when any movement of consequence, not in the usual routine of public transactions, is determined on by the executive powers of the commonwealth ; it then behoves a free people, jealous of their liberties, to interest themselves in the national concerns, and not repose too unlimited a confidence in their delegates ; any citizen has then a right to offer his opinions on a subject alike interesting to all. But if ever a period in the annals of this country demanded their attention, it is surely the present one ; a period big with the future

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fate and perhaps existence of the British empire.

By the final decision of both Houses of Parliament on the 29th of March last, a war is determined on with Russia—to compel that power to give peace to the Turk—and thus to restore tranquillity to Europe. We are further bound, by the faith of treaties, to co-operate with our continental allies, in whatever measures they please to interpose their interference for so desirable a purpose. Such are the specious reasons (specious I trust they will be made to appear) held out by the minister, to plunge this country in the calamities of war.

In all the wars which Great Britain has been engaged in (save the last) since the revolution, it has been her fate to lavish her blood and treasures—not for her own aggrandizement—

grandizement—not for extending her commerce, or securing her possessions; for the former was always overlooked, and the latter interrupted and weakened:—but to support continental connections, though the parties secretly wished her downfall, and to fight the battles of continental powers—who thanked her with “Curfes, not loud, but deep.”

Who does not, on a retrospect of all our wars, from those of William the Third to the peace of Fontainbleau, see that we were ever made the dupe, the cat’s paw, or the foot ball of our worthy allies? For while they shifted about with ever veering interests, poor *John*, poor knotty-pated *etourdi John Bull* had to bear the blows and pay the piper.

On the accession of James I. to the throne of these kingdoms, we had no national debt,

The preceding sovereign, though she sometimes bullied her subjects, yet she could never bully them out of their money. The use she made of the little they chose to grant her, the annals not of England only, but of all Europe, record. It is true we had no standing military establishment to maintain, nor did we keep in pay a body of ten thousand mercenaries to subjugate our fellow citizens, because we were then intent on planting those colonies whose good-will we afterwards judged proper to alienate;—but we had a fleet which defeated the Invincible Armada, and which despoiled the treasures of Peru—and we had a militia which assisted in severing the seven united provinces from the galling yoke of Spain, and in placing Henry IV. on the throne of France.

Such actions we performed under female government, without a national debt: let

us see our atchievements under kings, and with one.

Our first exploit was, to sacrifice to foreign intrigues, and those too of our bitterest and most avowed enemy—the ablest and most virtuous of our citizens, Raleigh, the ornament and boast of his country, who added peaceably those gems to the imperial diadem which we afterwards outrageously flung away. In the following reign, the same intrigues and connections instigated the executive power to wage war, and to impose taxes to support that war, without the concurrence, and contrary to the assent of the legislative. But in the preceding reign, funds had been instituted, loans opened, and a debt contracted, which at the accession of Charles I. amounted to 360,000*l*. and which continued from the moment of its first existence, rapidly to encrease ;

crease; nor could the convulsions of the constitution, in consequence of the arbitrary stretch of prerogative in the crown, extinguish the national debt. Government, whether republican or regal, found it equally expedient, and like a sun-beam, shining through the midst of a whirl-wind, it still preserved its station, unmoved, in every contending vicissitude.

Monarchy fell, and one branch of the constitution suffered a temporary suspension; still all was not lost; our innate vigour and native spirit remained unimpaired, and the money that was raised, was not applied with futility, nor our wars directed without effect. Our fleets awed the old world, and brought home the treasures of the new, besides annexing a most valuable territory (the island of Jamaica) to the empire; and if we were induced to join
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our victorious arms to those of France, it was not for nothing we did it. We did not fight her battles, and pay her subsidies at the same time ; but for our assistance in one short campaign, we obtained the key of France and of the Low Countries (Dunkirk) which place, ever to be regretted by England, and worth forty Gibaltars, a thoughtless monarch sold to gratify the extravagance of his mistresses, and satisfy the rapacity of his panders. He soon afterwards was even so abject as to become the pensioner of a haughty king, who nevertheless trembled on his throne a few years before, at the very name of a British citizen.

The general interests of the nation, notwithstanding, continued to prosper under this reign ; and indeed we find an alliance with our old but gallant enemies, was ever less

less pernicious to the public welfare than any we ever made with our faithful friends, as we were left to the peaceable and solid enjoyment of extending our commerce and improving our colonies.

It was the peculiar fate of the infatuated house of Stuart, that misfortunes could not teach moderation, nor fatal experience instruct in the true principles of government. And however rejoiced we ought to be at having been able to preserve the constitution, by the exclusion of arbitrary power; yet we must ever lament the occasion that forced us to place the crown on the head of a foreigner, whose home connexions and attachments of course induced him to make his newly acquired dominions subservient to their interests.

An uninterrupted series of wars and continental

tinental connexions was the immediate consequence, which continued from that time to the present hour to harass and oppress this devoted country. For the national debt, which at the revolution was only 650,000*l.* was left, at the death of William, at no less a sum than fifteen millions and an half ! But the glory of the wars in the subsequent reign, while these wars evinced to the world our perfect disinterestedness, and made an enormous fortune for our successful general, only cost the nation two or three hundred thousand of her choicest subjects, and thirty-eight millions of entailed expence—which left a debt, on the death of the queen, of fifty-four millions.

Once more the chief magistracy remained to be disposed of, or bestowed by the people ; and once more a family of strangers was established on the throne.

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With respect to our internal government, and the just limits of the prerogative of the crown, we must confess the illustrious house of Brunswick has not abused the trust reposed in them ; nor was our national burthen increased, but rather lessened, during the reign of the first George ; but it was natural for the first branches of that house, as foreigners, to be attached to the little spot from whence they derive their origin, and where they were accustomed, like all other German princes, to act the despot uncontrouled. Hence an inextricable entanglement with strange politics ; hence transactions peculiarly inimical to the true interests of England, whose insular situation required no such, and whose immense extent of sea coast, and never-failing fertility, secured to her unassisted, unsupported, unconnected the commerce of the world ; and might, could she have remained a neutral

tral power, have made her the *real* arbitress of Europe.

In Holland we have an example. Holland, a salt marsh wrested from the ocean, without one natural harbour that would shelter a fishing boat, and situated in the midst of contending nations, contrived to become, by observing a strict neutrality at one time, the greatest maritime power in Europe, but departing from that wise system of conduct, what is she now?—a cypher!

Our national debt, which hitherto advanced with a steady but not very quick motion, now hastened with inconceivable swiftness. Heretofore, single millions added continually to its size and force; now, tens of millions encreased both. Like a particle of snow on the summit of the Alps, acci-

dentally set in motion by a sudden gust of wind, whose impetus increasing with its bulk, as it bounds rapidly down the vast declivity, 'till at length becoming in magnitude itself a mountain, it overwhelms in its irresistible course, villages, towns, and whole districts, in one promiscuous ruin.

We are now to enquire, what we ever gained by our wars and alliances;—save the island of Jaimaica before mentioned, (an easy conquest) and Gibraltar, we have nothing to shew in exchange for all our expence of blood and treasure. But there is Canada. Fatal conquest! pernicious acquisition! from which we have derived no benefit, unless adding ninety millions to the national debt be one; whereas had it remained in the hands of its original possessors, there is almost a moral certainty that the American States would not now be separated from

from their parent country ; because an inveterate animosity subsisted between the rival colonies ; and the Americans would have needed too much our assistance, and would have been too much taken up in quarrels with their natural enemy, ever to have formed an alliance with her, much less separate from the mother country.

It was that splended war, that began in 1755 and ended in 1763, which lost us our colonies, besides increasfing our debt from fifty-two, to the enormous sum of one hundred and forty-six millions ; the interest of which in order to provide ways and means for, the minister was induced to employ unconstitutional methods, by taxing our colonies, contrary to their own consent, and that in the end lopped off a limb from the body politic that can never be supplied. But the loss of a limb was our smallest loss :

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an addition to our burden, before considered insupportable, of one hundred and twenty millions, threatens a political death one day or other to the whole constitution.

Our battling alone, through so many enemies, though maimed and mangled, and nearly crushed to death, while it evinces at once the strength of our stamina, and proved our resources to be almost inexhaustible, shewed at the same time our heedless and stupid neglect in omitting to secure an alliance with some maritime power, which perhaps in this one instance only would have been serviceable. Now, indeed, government, taught by woeful experience, is resolved to rectify its former error, and we are to have triple, quadruple, and quintuple alliances in plenty. As we have so many more colonies left, and France so willing and able to excite revolts in them; so because the lottery number,

number, which John Bull missed purchasing, came up a twenty thousand pound prize, cunning Johnny is resolved to purchase the identical number in every succeeding lottery!

War indeed, and continental connections, seem to be the hobby horse and darling passion of the present premier. He is on the fidgets till he gets us engaged, no matter with whom or how, provided we are at war; provided he can display his address in finding out ways and means, and his finesse in plausibly humbugging the nation. In this respect at least, if in nothing else, he proves himself a son of Chatham. No sooner seated in power, and after the nation had began to breathe, but he engages in intrigues to support arbitrary sway in Holland, and added to our accumulated heap by the expence of a new armament, Luckily the
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weakness and division among our enemies postponed our ruin. This squall blown over, we again enjoyed a little repose; when, lo! on a sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, without the least previous notice, we must go to war with Spain. A new armament is fitted out, by means of more millions. The Catholic King, however, finding us in earnest, permits us to catch sea otters at Nootka in peace, and we and our armaments, to the great disappointment of the minister and the sailors, get liberty once more to repose. Yet in the moment of returning peace, news arrives from India of a new war just begun there; the provocation too was apparently on our part.

In all this recapitulation of wars and of expences, though they might have been better avoided, yet there was some plea for them. They were not all totally unfounded
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in reason and common sense. Our last preparations, against Spain in particular, had the concurrence of the nation, and the assent of the minority of the house; the honour of the nation was to be supported, and its commercial consequence maintained, particularly when we had to do with a power that must always be awed into terms. But in this new expedition, in this most perilous Quixote adventure, what are our motives, or, though we should succeed, what are to be our benefits?

Turky, though in Europe, has yet no more to do with its political balance than Persia. The Turks derived their origin from Asia; and Asiatic they remain in manners and in government. They interfere not in our politics or our quarrels, and view us in no other light than as infidels and enemies to their faith, which it would

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be highly meritorious to convert, or to exterminate. Have they sought our alliance? Have they supplicated our assistance? Where are their ambassadors? We see the near prospect of ruin cannot humble their ignorant pride, or soften their brutal hatred. They disdain to send an embassy, or to ask help from Christian dogs!

With Russia we never had a dispute; on the contrary, we have been connected with her in the closest amity for three hundred years. On this connection may be said to depend the very existence of Britain; because on it depends the existence of our navy. We pay her a balance of upwards of two millions *per annum* for the timber, the iron, the hemp, the flax, &c. which her extensive territories afford in such abundance; a commerce surely of more importance, and better worth our money, than the wines or
sugar,

sugar, tobacco or tea, which cost so many millions more.

The arguments which the minister deigned to offer for undertaking this war, are really curious. One of the first is, That Russia must not be suffered to retain her conquests; because she would then bound Poland on the east. As if Poland would not be equally endangered from the Turk, who on every pretext spreads fire and desolation through her dominions. But the fact is, if there be truth in geography, that Poland is now, and ever has been, bounded on the east, as well as on the north, by Russia, and Russian Tartary. It would, after all, be infinitely happier for that miserable country to be annexed to any other European power, unless its constitution could be totally altered and new modeled.

In the late partition of part of her territories, we see how little regard princes pay to justice, where opportunity is united with power ; and we should put not more confidence in Prussia, our ally, to guarantee the possessions of Poland, than in Russia our new enemy ; for in case the latter is obliged to submit, and the former becomes the *dominante* power, she will not be satisfied with less than Dantzic and Thorn, at least, the only ports and the only supports left to wretched Poland.

We are next told by the minister, that there can be no safety for any state whose frontiers border on the Russian empire. She must, however, and always did border on some kingdom, unless Muscovy was ever an island. But except when, by the intrigues of Prussia, she joined her and Austria in the dismemberment of Poland, it does not appear

pear that she ever attempted to molest any neighbouring nation. Little Denmark and little Sweden have long remained perfectly safe in her vicinity ; nor did she ever make use of the power she might have done to crush the latter, though provoked beyond bearing, and wantonly attacked, and almost ruined, by that madman Charles XII. whose frantic conduct justly lost his country, Ingria and Livonia, provinces however which Sweden herself took possession of some time before, without any other pretext than the sword.

How short-sighted have politicians and statesmen ever been ! Examine our treaties and alliances ; did they ever continue for even ten years unchanged ?

The most trivial event, the death or accession of a sovereign, totally dissolved all
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former connections ; and new combinations, like chemical attractions, took place, which altered the nature of the whole. What has ever happened, will happen again ; and England and Prussia, who now seem so determined on a war with the empress, may, in five or six years, form a triple alliance with that potentate, against France, Spain, Austria, and Turkey !

But the stale and chimerical idea of Russia's aiming at universal monarchy, is supremely ridiculous, and such a notion entertained by the minister, a satire on the good sense of the house. Admitting such an event ever possible, it could not happen in less than two or three centuries ; and for us to ruin ourselves now, to prevent the probability of it then, would be like denying ourselves a fire, that our posterity should never be in want of fuel, because in about
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a thousand years our coal mines may be exhausted.

The fact is, Russia needs no greater enemy than her own conquests. She is hatching the embryos of future kingdoms; and her exertions both in a philosophical and a political point of view, must ultimately tend to the welfare of the European republic, and to the happiness of mankind.

Her dominions are doubtless immensely extensive; but what sort are they? Frozen regions, dolorous wastes, frightful solitudes, where the sight of a human being is a prodigy; a fillet of the sea coast of France or England is of more political consequence than the half of them.

From the Don to the Duna, from Riga to Azoph, her southern frontier, it would require

quire almost half the male inhabitants to form a line of protection; this wire-drawn line then, without solidity, must on the first strain be broken, every fragment of which would form materials for a large kingdom. For all this immense territory possesses but four, or at most five sea ports, viz. St. Peterburgh, Riga, Revel, and Wyburg in the Baltic, and Archangel in the northern sea; and even these are unapproachable for one half the year. So that the counties of Hampshire and Dorset alone, in this respect, surpass the whole vast dominions of Russia, who, shut up in that narrow sea, with two such rivals in the same cage as Sweden and Denmark, what has Europe to fear from her maritime power?

Another profound argument of the minister is, that “ should Russia possess the navigation of the Black Sea, she might, at
any

any time she thought proper, shut us out of both that sea and the Baltic, and thus we would have to seek elsewhere for naval supplies." But admit the absurdity for a moment, that she, merely to injure us indirectly, would deprive herself of a trade which yields two millions of hard guineas per annum. What in the name of wonder has the navigation in the Black Sea to do with our trade in the Baltic, or indeed with our trade any where? It is a question if ever a British flag appeared there. In short, we have as much to say to the Yellow Sea, in China,

But Poland, it seems, is to supply us with stores in future through that channel, though nobody ever heard of Poland possessing a port there; besides, I always till now understood, that she was situated some three or four hundred miles to the north-

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west, and can have no possible communication with that sea, except by means of the Boryisthenes ; down which river she might, indeed float timber for eight or nine hundred miles to the Black Sea ; but how is it to be obtained when it arrives there ? I am afraid, if we depended on being supplied with a single spar from thence, our navy might lie up in ordinary till doomsday. It would be infinitely more feasible to fetch our naval stores from Norfolk Island, by the way of the Red Sea, and so across the isthmus of Suez, which the Ottomans cannot do less than make us a present of.

The British flag has and may again be displayed in the White, the Red, and probably in the Yellow, but never in the Black Sea ; nor need we repine, while it continues to rule the universal Green.

After

After all, this is a wonderful and sudden revolution in political sentiments in favour of the Turks. In the last Russian and Turkish wars, Constantinople was nearly in the same danger, yet all Europe viewed the probable accomplishment of its fall, with tranquillity, and even complacency; England did more; she interested herself almost as much as the Russians themselves, and the total destruction of the Turkish navy in the Archipelago, was principally owing to the English admiral, officers, and sailors, that largely contributed to man the Russian fleet. Till now, the Turks were considered as a band of the cruellest robbers who, passing over from Asia, overturned the Greek empire, took the imperial city by assault, and forcibly kept possession of it ever since. And what were their reasons? The scymitar, and the Alcoran. "If you believe in the latter," said they, "then you

must obey our sublime sultan, the representative of the prophet ; if you do not, then you are an infidel ; and the former must compel you, or put you to death as unfit to live." Cogent reasons ! unanswerable logic ; would that we had as good in our crusade against Russia !

But has the residence of these people in Europe softened their ferocity, removed their prejudices, or enlightened their ignorance ? Are they not as much Turks at this day, as when they sacked Constantinople under Mahomet II. What is it but their weakness that even now preserves Europe ? There may be those living who could testify, that they penetrated with their destructive sabres to her very heart, and would have planted the Crescent on the walls of Vienna, had not Sobieski's well-timed valour saved Germany. It was but the other day too,
that

that Prince Eugene, checked their career at Belgrade ; and even now, if fortune, as in the beginning, favoured their arms, 'tis not the complaisance of Poland, Prussia, or England, that could protect a single village from destruction.

Had the Turks, when first they planted themselves in Europe, gradually conformed to the soil, climate, customs, and form of government there ; had they in fine become at length European, even though they possessed the best portion of it by force, and kept it by injustice, yet there might be some plea now why they should not be dispossessed ; but how contrary is the fact ! instead of becoming more civilized, they have become more savage ; and a residence of three hundred and fifty years has only confirmed their rancorous hatred, and indelibly fixed their brutal ignorance. Under their first emperors
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Othman, Amurath, Mahomet, and Solyman the Magnificent, the splendor of their actions gave a celebrity to, and even elevated their character; and a degree of magnanimity in some measure supplied the want of humanity and justice. They treated Christians with somewhat like liberality, and were not at such open war with the arts and sciences, nor so profoundly ignorant as their posterity at the close of the eighteenth century: for can it be credited, that not above ten years ago the remaining books of Livy, so long the desideratum of literature, were burned by order of the grand seignior at Constantinople! Considering the difference of the times, this feat outdid Omar and the Alexandrian library all to nothing. These are the only people under Heaven whom adversity cannot soften, nor multiplied examples of barbarous errors teach experience; even in adversity, though we may not triumph over, we cannot

not pity them. When the tyger tears his fellow captive in the toils, we detest the odious monster. Ignorance alone, considered abstractly, is only a negative appellation, and is innoxious ; but ignorance joined with bigotry, and assimilated with power, like mercury united to the marine acid, forms a most destructive poison. Such is the ignorance of the Turks ; what has been the fatal consequences to mankind, their annals engraved with the bloody point of the sabre but too fatally shew. They are the locusts of the prophecies, that saw paradise blooming before them, but desolation and death in their rear ; and, like those insects of omnipotent vengeance, after having destroyed and ravaged till there was nothing left to ravage and destroy, they lie down in stupid indifference, and perish in heaps themselves. These people then are a deplorable example, that human depravity may be continually

tinually sinking from bad to worse; and that there is no point of congelation in the mental thermometer where we can say, it can go no farther. How happy would it be for Europe, were this cancerous tumour, that continues to diffuse pestilence, war and tyranny, removed from her bosom. Far be it from me to wish their extermination. They are human beings, and, individually considered, may be harmless and humane; but let them be sent across the Hellespont, to occupy their primitive settlements, the flowery, delightful and fertile vales of Asia Minor. They will find a country and climate even superior in deliciousness to that which they leave behind, and, thanks to themselves, ample verge and space enough for ten times their number. Let them make Aleppo or Bagdat their capital, or Balbec or Palmyra, which they will find conveniently untenanted, and will have nothing to

to do but to roof in. There they will find themselves infinitely happier, because all things will be congenial to their habits and inclinations ; sunshine and indolence, silence and ignorance, uninterrupted : and if they choose to gratify their propensity for blood, they have the Persian heretics at hand to keep their sabres from rusting.

In the mean time, Constantinople, (which is only an immense collection of wretched booths) and every other town these people occupied on this side of the Hellespont, with every particle of exuviae they might leave behind, should be burned with fire, till not a vestige remained. Then would the sons of Europe supply their place with a new progeny ; when freed from those two scourges of mankind, pestilence and the sword, then would the imperial city of Constantine spring from her ashes, new robed

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with Attic elegance ; then too would Greece once more raise from the dust her laurelled head, delightful reflection ! while the shades of Aristides, of Epimanondas, of Solon, of Socrates, of Xenophon and Plato, of Homer and of Sophocles, would hail the genius of their native country under more favourable auspices, the sacred spot that humanized and illuminated the world.

There can be no doubt but such a revolution is devoutly to be wished by every one who can look beyond the narrow limits of purblind policy ; but which of the European powers has most right to bring it about, is the grand question.

The Russians were hitherto looked up to, even by the Turks themselves, as the only nation able to atchieve the glorious deed. And certainly, though they can claim no alliance

liance with the family of the Palæologi, any more than the king of the Romans can with that of the Cæsars, yet the being of the Greek church, and tinctured with Eastern manners, together with constant provocations received and wars with their mortal enemies, all together give them a superior right, on the score of retributive justice, to drive the Turks out of Europe.

Much has been declaimed against the barbarity of the Russians themselves; but surely with prejudiced injustice. Scarce three fourths of a century has elapsed since they first began to participate of European civilization; and it must be owned, their advances have been so rapid, that at this day they are not behind the foremost. In civil legislation they yield to none: they were the first and only state that has abolished capital punishments; and the event justifies

the humane policy; for there are more crimes, punishable by death, committed in some counties of England, than in all that immense empire put together in the same space of time.

Though this monarchy, like all others of Europe, England, and now France excepted, be despotic; yet it is among the first in toleration and mildness. All nations and religions are not only permitted, but invited and encouraged to settle in the Russian dominions. They alone supported the protestants of Poland, and prevented their absolute destruction. But the English has ever been the most favoured nation. Their late vice admiral was a Scotchman; and an Irishman (General Brown) is at present governor of Cronstadt. In short, a subject of the British empire finds himself as much at home at St. Petersburg as in London.

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As to their progress in the fine arts, that noble city, the illustrious trophy of the immortal Peter over barbarism, is a remarkable example. Its quays and arsenals, not less than its marble palaces and colossal statues, evince, that though the newest city in Europe, it is hardly equalled by any in useful and superb magnificence. The purchase of the Haughton collection of paintings too, is a memorable proof of their advancement, and of our retrograding.

As to the rest, it is not to be expected that this people can free themselves from prejudices all at once, and abolish in a moment the vassalage of the peasantry; that must be a work of time, as it was with the countries where it no longer exists: yet it remained, even in England, till the reign of Elizabeth. But let nations, civilized centuries before them, set an example;
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not to mention unhappy Poland, let Denmark, let all the kingdoms and states of Germany ; and, to come to ourselves, let Ireland, whose peasantry, in every thing but name, are as errant slaves as the Poles themselves.

The storming of Ismail has been also much harped on ; but not a word of the Turks cutting off the heads of all their prisoners, and sending them in sacks to Constantinople ; it was so natural for them ! I own I can see in this instance nothing out of the common and unavoidable fate of places taken by storm. The besieged asked for no quarter, and they got none ; they continued fighting to the last gasp, and killed as many of their enemies as fell themselves. Besides, the Cossacks were the principle executioners, whose only pay is plunder ; their very occupation is to kill their
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enemy for the *spolia opima*. But, for God's sake, let not us, who have some how got the name of the savages of Europe, let not us preach against the inhumanity of war, while the wounds of that of America are not yet cicatrized. What is the storming of Ismail to the burning of Charlestown, an unresisting open place, merely to veil our army in the smoke? Nero had a better excuse for setting fire to Rome. Or what is it to the surprise and massacre of Colonel Washington's regiment of horse in cold blood, when assembled at dinner in an empty granary? Or what, to the havoc made by our dogs of war on the plains of Indostan? But enough of such horrid enumerations.

The armed neutrality is another bone of contention. But, without examining their right to call in question the conduct of nations, in the mode they adopted to secure
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their commerce from interruption, we are not indebted to Russia exclusively for that scheme. After France, our worthy ally the late king of Prussia, was the *primum mobile* and grand instigator ; an ally whom we alone supported, in his utmost need, with our armies and our treasures, to a greater amount than the fee simple of his sandy, barren, contemptible hereditary electorate was worth. And what were our returns ? at all times wishing success to our enemies, so that his own interests could hardly prevent him from openly joining them. He even sent General Washington a present of a superb sword ; and while he pocketed our gold, he hated us most cordially, both individually and as a nation. I laugh at the exclamations against the injustice of Catherine, when I recollect how cordially we assisted a lawless despot, whose reasons were showers of bullets, and whose logic the

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point of the bayonet; who considered his unhappy subjects merely as carriages manufactured for their firelocks, automaton made only to draw a trigger and be shot at; to seize by open force on the possessions of others; and to spread carnage, desolation and fire through all Germany.

Politics have now veered about, and Baron Hertzberg, it seems, does us the honour to be our friend. Prime ministers understand each other; but the late Fredrick neither needed nor had one.

By the way though, is it not unjust and arrogant in Great Britain to pretend to dictate a mode of conduct to any power that interferes not with her or her interests? To dictate to Russia is ridiculous; and to attempt to enforce those dictates with such a weight about our neck as the national
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debt, is to the last degree absurd. It is like a bull dog chained to a log, barking at a Greenland bear.

Ministers, however, at all events must have their wills. And, granting the expediency of the measure, our next question is, How is it to be carried into effect? We are to send a fleet to the Baltic—Good. But what is it to do when it gets there, if the empress still continues obstinate? Salute, I suppose, the armed neutrality (if they be neutral) of Sweden and Denmark. We must not think all this while, that there are such things as foul ground, shallows, and lee shores in the Baltic, and hardly one neutral port; or that we would be safer in Torbay than the Gulf of Finland. But what then? Why then we are to salute the empress's fleet of fifty sail of the line. And then? Then, take, sink, burn, and destroy

troy every ship of them. And then? Why then, lie before Cronstadt, and wait for the arrival of the army of our great and good ally, which may be somewhat retarded, as it has a train of heavy battering artillery to drag through Poland, Lithuania, Livonia, and Ingria, and to cut in pieces by the way Prince Potemkin and all his forces; after which there will be nothing to stop the march to the capital, except Novogorod, Riga, Narva, and some few other fortified cities. When it *does* arrive, however, we have nothing to do but to besiege the citadel, while our fleet thunders away against Cronstadt—takes it; attacks the batteries at the mouth of the Neva—takes them too; and so sail up to the very palace in triumph. Well, now we have taken Peterburgh; suppose Catharine continues still obstinate, what is to be done next? Drive her before us to Moscow, to be sure. But

the fleet—how can it follow? O! the fleet: the fleet we will leave safe and sound locked up in the ice; or we may contrive snow sledges, and so let them sail over land like the Chinese waggons. And then? Why then take Moscow; it is poorly fortified, though 24 miles in circuit. And then? Then, if she wont submit, drive her to Tobolski; for we must still keep between her and the Black Sea. And then? Psha! Why then, drive her

To hell, to Zembla, or the Lord knows where.—

Once there was a rat, who found himself possessed of a snug corner in a common sewer. He thought it, however, too small for his increasing family, and resolved to enlarge its dimensions, by joining other holes to it. To work he goes, and succeeded beyond his hopes; but still, his ideas enlarging with the extent of his habitation, he

he goes on undermining, till at last he finds himself at once in St. Paul's church. "Aye!" says he, "this is a good roomy house, but "somewhat of the largest; *that*, however, "is not a bad fault." While he was yet speaking, the congregation began to assemble, and the organ roared a base; away scampers our rat, squeezes again through the chink, breaks a leg, rubs of half his fur, and forgets his tail in his hurry, right glad however to have escaped with life, and be able to recount his adventures.

To accomplish all the purposes of the campaign, we have no less time than from June to September! after which, our gallant tars will return triumphant, loaded with—iron and deals, pitch, tar, and hemp; with the great princess Rusty Fusty in one pocket, and the Sublime Porte in the other.

If,

If, however, by some unforeseen accidents, (and unforeseen accidents will happen to the best concerted schemes) nothing can be effected this summer: What then? We have only to raise a few more millions next winter, and send one fleet to the Baltic, and another to the Black Sea; no fear of importing the plague from the latter place, as we are to have plenty of bark and James's powder on board the fleet. Catherine, after all this, must surely knock under, and give up Ocsakow to the Porte. The Porte in return, will perhaps permit us to fetch masts and spars from the Euxine; and corn sometimes, may be, from Crim Tartary.

Such then would be the result of our interference, viewed in the most favourable light; but the reverse is frightful. Should any accident happen to our fleet; should it

it be shattered by storms, on shoals, and on rocks, in a sea where they have scarce room to tack about, or taken and destroyed by the enemy ; and should that enemy in turn threaten to invade England, than which (our fleet gone) nothing would be easier—What would become of us? National bankruptcy and political ruin would be the least of our evils ; indeed (the horrors of an invasion out of the question) I hardly think the others would be evils at all ; and consequently, this war, as far as it furthers those events, becomes, even though we fail in our first intention, a desirable good.

What is national ruin, and national bankruptcy? These terms have not been defined ; for, like our dying hour, they will not bear too close an examination.

Suppose

Suppose now, *petitio principii*, some fatal disaster happens to our fleet, immediately followed by bad news from India, supplies fail, parliament refuses to raise any more new taxes, or the people to pay any; the funds tumble down into the very bulb of the political thermometer; every one fells out, or strives to fell out; foreigners draw their property; the South Sea bubble bursts; and the subtle gaz, the national debt, whose nominal value approaches to the almost incomprehensible sum of nearly two hundred and fifty millions, vanishes in a moment into thin blue air.

Now then we are ruined and bankrupts; and now that the affair is over, what mighty consequences follow?—Government in the reign of Charles II. became bankrupt—and its creditors lost 2,800,000*l*. The moiety they did get, is the foundation stone of our
present

present national debt ; but there is a wide difference between the bankruptcy of an honest man, who fails through misfortune, and of a knave, who defrauds his creditors ; the one we commiserate and assist, the other we provide a gibbet for. The case of the former would now be that of the nation, who notwithstanding feels itself alive, no bones broke, with the same circulating specie, the same trade, the same manufactures, &c. as before, administration compounds with its creditors, the funds lie fallow for two or three years, and then dividends of $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, 1, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. are issued in lieu of the 3, $3\frac{1}{2}$, $4\frac{1}{2}$, and 5 per cents. Many no doubt would experience a temporary ruin from this event : that is, they would be obliged to live at the rate of one thousand year, where before they lived at ten thousand ; but a few years would make all these odds, even. The nation however, the nation freed from such an incubus, would

H

spring

spring forward with the alacrity of youth, guided by the experience of age; what might we not perform!—An opportunity would then offer to take an exact survey of our venerable constitution. That august pile, which has stood so long the admiration of the world, would need few repairs; only a little cleansing, and rather paring than patch work. The walls would bear it; the materials are as strong and as sound as ever, and still calculated to outlast ten of your modern porcelain fabrics. We should clear away too all those additional buttresses, and patched up offices, which only serve to darken and incommode the principal structure, and conceal as far as possible that beautiful symmetrical whole, the result of a just disposition of parts. Thus, with our ideal pile cleared and restored to its pristine elegance, and with real buildings for our king, lords, and commons, in lieu of the present hog-

styes

styes, which the doge of St. Marino would be ashamed to own, we might begin the world on a new stock, though under the old firm.

Such are the fanciful reveries of one who regards his country with the fondness of a lover, and is grieved to see strong symptoms of a decline in her constitution, exemplified in a visible and encreasing preponderance of the balance towards the crown, and a universal listlessness, indifference, and depravity in the people. As to the minority of the parliament, it is now merely nominal; the oppositions' occupations gone! What is become of the phillipics of the sublime and beautiful, which used to give such a dose to the American premier, and electrify the whole House beside? Where sleeps the thunder of the British Demosthenes, which devoted to the block the heads of ministers

by the dozen?—Quite changed! the big rough manly voice converted to a courtly whisper, and the smooth razored cheek shrunk from behind the patriotic beard; The *fortiter* is ill exchanged for the *suaviter in modo*; and in place of bold truths told with generous freedom, we are now afraid to mention Hell to ears polite.

This sudden transition to lady-like sentiments, we may infer from the conclusion of his last speech on the present subject—where we are told “That he would *wash his hands* out of the business.”

But since a minority is necessary to the *etiquette* of the House, they no doubt are put on a new establishment, and, like money for blanks in the last lottery, receive *douceurs* for their amenance and discretion.

Thus

Thus I have ventured to throw my thoughts loosely together, but with good humour and frankness, *seria mixta joci*—on subjects which nearly concern every individual yet must they ever revert to the principal object of this essay—a war with Russia ; an affair of too much moment to be slightly or jocularly treated—an affair which not only involves the fate of the British empire, but the general felicity of Europe and of the whole world. May our exertions be directed for the best !

Though, as a Briton, I must ever rejoice at our successes, and repine at our mis-carriages ; yet I own, as a citizen of the world, and as a philanthropist, I would be happy to see the Russian eagle fluttering on the battlements of the seraglio.

F I N I S.

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